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John Coffee: Surveyor and Land Agent

By GORDON T. CHAPPELL

(Continued from July issue)

Among those individuals particularly interested in the land of this area was Andrew Jackson, who at this time was engaged in laying out plans for a military road through that part of the region near the present site of Florence, Alabama. He and Coffee met on May 25, 1817, "to make a small view of the country."⁴⁵ At the shoals of the Tennessee River, the present site of Florence, Jackson predicted there would arise "one of the largest towns in the western country—here will capital concentrate itself—and it will become the Nashville of Tennessee."⁴⁶ Jackson's interest was so whetted by the fine land of the Tennessee Valley that he consulted Coffee on several occasions regarding the choice sites. On September 28, 1817, he wrote from Melton's Bluff, saying, "let me see you as I pass and I would be glad if you could bring with you the survey of the 3rd Township and range—and that including Coldwater or Spring Creek—I have but little doubt, but something can be done at the sales—on which subject I wish to see you lest I be compelled to the Eastward before I have the opportunity of again seeing you." Jackson was selecting at this time the site of his future Alabama plantation and arranging for its purchase at the sales.

Throughout the region Coffee had noted many choice plots of land which he hoped to speculate in himself.⁴⁷ His favor-

⁴⁵ Coffee to Mary Coffee, May 21, 1817.

⁴⁶ Andrew Jackson to Coffee, Aug. 12, 1817.

⁴⁷ Coffee to Mary Coffee, May 21, 1817.

able situation for speculation was recognized by his father-in-law, John Donelson, who wrote, August 26: "As your situation in life has become so interesting it is absolutely necessary you should be rich and I think by your industry you can be so; — — — I have thought of [my] coming out some time in September to see the land—I wish to purchase two 640 acre tracts one of which I wish to keep for Stockley; the other 640 must pay for the two. This is my way of speculation."

Just what course to follow in order to make the most of his opportunities was a great problem to Coffee at this period. He had many offers to join the numerous companies of speculators which were being formed by the wealthier groups. On the other hand, he might contract with individuals as he had done in Tennessee and speculate in the smaller tracts which he might purchase at the sales. Jackson's advice was solicited in determining the proper course to follow. On August 12 the General suggested:

Your interest clearly points to your shackling yourself with no companies but to make contracts with individuals, for the entering of their land—let individuals therefore combine and give you certain interests, for your knowledge and labour—This you can do, by obliging with each to attend to their contract in rotation, or in certain sections of country where they may respectively choose . . . I would enter into no company unless, where the terms promise, a compensation and equivalent for my knowledge and service equal to those that might be obtained from Individuals.

The final course chosen by Coffee was a combination of the two alternatives. Where the opportunity was great he joined a company. On the other hand he organized the clerks in his office in such a way as to reap the profits forthcoming from aid to individual buyers. This was done on January 10, 1818, before the first sales, which came in February. Under the terms of agreement the clerks in the office were to pay him one-half of any land, money, or other consideration they might receive for purchasing, locating, or giving information to any

other persons enabling them to purchase lands within the surveyed district. No information was to be given gratuitously and Coffee was to receive his one-half as soon as it was paid by the purchaser.⁴⁸ Through such an agreement the priceless field notes and plats of all the deputy surveyors in the district would provide a source of profit and at the same time be protected from the curious eye of those to whom Coffee did not choose to impart information.

That such use of the field notes and plats as a source of profit for the officials was taken for granted as a part of the prerequisites of their office is indicated not only by the correspondence of the time, but also by the following matter-of-fact advertisement which appeared in the *Huntsville Republican*, January 21, 1818:

We the undersigned, lately deputy surveyors in the country north of Tennessee River, which is about to be offered for sale, and now acting as clerks in the Surveyor's Office at Huntsville, Having had a free use of the field notes of the Office; and having been enabled to obtain a general, as well as a particular knowledge of the whole, have now opened an office at the house lately occupied by Mr. Clay as an attorney's office, where one of us will always be found ready to give some information to people wishing to purchase to an advantage, for a liberal percentum, we pay either a part of the Land purchased; or money, which shall be optionary to the purchaser. To those persons wishing to purchase to a great advantage and who have not a good knowledge of the Country, would do well to give us a call. Signed John S. Doxey, James W. Exum, James H. Weakley.

This arrangement insured an income from the smaller purchasers, but the greatest income was to be had through participation in speculating companies. These companies took many forms. The frontier leaders who possessed a limited amount of ready cash but knew the nature of the lands offered for sale entered into contracts with wealthy individuals of the East who had large sums of money available for investment. One

⁴⁸ Articles of agreement between Coffee and his clerks, Jan. 10, 1818.

such company was organized on February 11, 1818, between John Childress, James Jackson, John Donelson, Andrew Jackson, and John Coffee, all of the frontier region, and Thomas Kirkman, John McCrea, and John Goddard of Philadelphia. The former were to arrange for the purchase, and the latter to supply a large portion of the money necessary.

The most popular and prevalent form of company at this time, however, was the joint stock town company. Many such organizations were set up in the days preceding the first sales at Huntsville. Coffee was a very desirable member for any such organization because of his inside information and his great influence in the territory. Before the day of the sale Coffee bought stock in many such companies for himself, for his relatives—the Jacksons, Donelsons, McLemores, and Martins—and for his intimate friends.⁴⁹ Coffee was always careful to purchase an interest in only those companies formed by people of the frontier and neighboring region, doubtless because he understood the hatred of the frontiersman for the outsider. In each instance he acted as agent for Jackson since the latter did not want his name mentioned in any such speculative venture.⁵⁰

Coffee's services as purchasing agent for the many individuals and groups make it very difficult to determine the exact amount of his own purchases. However, a study of the land books in which the sales were recorded shows that during the period of March 3 to December 13, 1818, alone, he entered in his own name eighty-three tracts of land varying in size from half-acre town lots to 640-acre tracts. The total number of acres bought was 16,201.97, and the total value of the land was stated at \$75,906.28.⁵¹ Throughout the remainder of his

⁴⁹ Coffee to James G. Martin, Feb. 10, 1818.

⁵⁰ Andrew Jackson to Coffee, Jan. 27, 1818.

⁵¹ Records of Huntsville Land Office, 1818, in Alabama State Department of Archives and History (Montgomery). This is one of the few volumes of these records not destroyed in the fire in Florence in 1827.

Life Coffee continued to buy from the government and then sell to settlers on terms they could meet. This practice became especially important after the change from the credit to the cash plan of selling government lands in 1820, when many of the newcomers to Alabama who did not have available cash were able to purchase from him on long term credit arrangements. In this way, he was not only making a profit for himself as a speculator, but was also making a substantial contribution toward a more rapid development of the frontier region in which he operated.

Coffee's land business and other activities were so extensive during the years following 1818 that one very nearly loses sight of the fact that he was surveyor general of Alabama during this period and retained this position until his death in 1833.⁵² His appointment as surveyor general on March 3, 1817, had given him supervision over only the public lands in the northern part of the Alabama Territory.⁵³ However, on April 20, 1818, his authority was extended by President James Monroe to all public lands in the Alabama Territory at a salary of \$2,000 per year and an allowance of \$1,500 as compensation for two clerks.⁵⁴ That his activities as a speculator were not construed by the Federal authorities as inconsistent with his official duties as surveyor general is indicated by the fact that he was reappointed to the position by each presidential administration from Monroe to Jackson. In addition to the surveying of new tracts of land preparatory to sale, he was occasionally called upon by the government to undertake some special assignment. In 1821, for example, he was designated to direct the surveying and marking of the Alabama-Mississippi state line from Tennessee boundary to the Gulf of Mexico.⁵⁵

⁵² Official notification of his reappointment as surveyor general of the public lands in Alabama, Feb. 17, 1823, Jan. 10, 1827, and July 9, 1831.

⁵³ George W. Campbell to Coffee, March 29, 1817.

⁵⁴ Official notification, Apr. 20, 1818; *United States Statutes at Large*, III, 466-467.

⁵⁵ Coffee's diary written while running the Alabama-Mississippi State Line.

The Alabama Territory was created from the Mississippi Territory by an act of Congress on March 3, 1817, but the boundary line had not been surveyed. According to the provisions of the act the line was to extend from the point where the southern boundary of Tennessee intersects the Tennessee River, "thence up the same to the mouth of Bear Creek, thence by direct line to the North-West corner of Washington County (Mississippi Territory), thence due south to the Gulf of Mexico. . . ." ⁵⁶

Coffee was assisted in this work by Thomas Freeman, surveyor general of Mississippi. These two agreed to meet at St. Stephens about the middle of May, 1820, and make final arrangements. ⁵⁷ On April 28, 1821, Coffee appointed James Exum to run a guide line from the mouth of Bear Creek on the Tennessee River to the northwest corner of Washington County. His salary was fixed at \$5.00 per day and the work was to commence May 1. ⁵⁸

Coffee and Freeman met at St. Stephens on May 26 and began discussing the method of surveying the line and the location of terminal points. Freeman thought the line should be run with mathematical instruments other than the compass, and a road cut out along the line. Coffee believed such a method would require all summer and hence favored the use of the compass, running first a guide line and then calculating the true line from the guide line. Coffee finally carried his point and the two agreed to run a guide line to the Gulf of Mexico from the northwest corner of Washington County, which was fixed at "the point on the Choctaw boundary line, where the Choctaw trading path crosses." When the point on the Gulf was determined the two agreed to separate, with Coffee supervising the running of the line from the northwest

⁵⁶ *United States Statutes at Large*, III, 371-372, 375.

⁵⁷ Freeman to Coffee, Apr. 23, 1820.

⁵⁸ Coffee to Exum, Apr. 28, 1820.

corner of Washington County to Bear Creek and Freeman directing the cutting of the line from the northwest corner of Washington County to the Gulf of Mexico.⁵⁹

On June 18, 1820, the experimental guide line to the Gulf of Mexico was completed and upon reaching the latter point it was found that the line fell "six miles, 22 chains, and 54 links, east of the mouth of the river or Bay of Pascagola." Since the line had encroached on Wayne, Green, and Jackson counties, Mississippi, Coffee and Freeman decided to move the experimental point on the Gulf of Mexico "three miles, 57 chains and 46 links east, which point was ten miles east of the mouth of the river or Bay of Pascagola" and here fix the permanent terminal point of the boundary line.⁶⁰ Authority to make such a change in the line was granted in the Alabama enabling act of 1819.⁶¹

Having fixed the terminal point on the Gulf of Mexico, Coffee proceeded to the northwest corner of Washington County and set James Exum, his surveyor, and his assistants to work on the permanent line between the latter point and Bear Creek, as agreed upon with Freeman.⁶² Coffee completed the work on his section of the line on August 13, having worked a total of 104 days at a wage of eight dollars a day. His wages and expenses amounted to a grand total of \$3,097.89½.⁶³

The charting of this boundary line put an end to a quarrel of long standing between the settlers of the new state of Alabama and Mississippi. (This controversy has been reopened in recent years as a result of the discovery of oil in the area.)

⁵⁹ Coffee's diary written while running the Alabama-Mississippi State Line, May 26, 1820; also articles of agreement between Coffee and Freeman, May 29, 1820.

⁶⁰ Memorandum, Coffee and Freeman, June 18, 1820.

⁶¹ *United States Statutes at Large*, II, 734; III, 490.

⁶² Coffee's diary written while running Alabama-Mississippi State Line, June 25, 1820.

⁶³ Memorandum of expenses in running the Alabama-Mississippi State Line, Aug. 12, 1820.

A better land agent than Coffee could not have been found at this time, for his position as surveyor general gave him wider contacts than any other man in the region. Prospective settlers either directly or indirectly received information from Coffee, as a rule, before coming out to the new country. Furthermore, the prominent men who had purchased lands in Alabama from him usually recommended that their friends do likewise. Letters of introduction of such prospective settlers are very numerous among the Coffee papers, indicating that men of many professions and strata of society were eager to engage his services.⁶⁴ Situated in such a key position, Coffee had a decided advantage in disposing of the property in which he had an interest, and to a great extent the power to select the people who would occupy it.

Although he seems to have used his position as surveyor to improve his own fortune, he was, nevertheless, in many cases performing a real service for the frontier region. In some instances he set up a credit system which enabled farmers to buy land on a long term basis. On other occasions he created what amounted to a pre-emption system, by helping those who had lived on the land as squatters prior to the survey to buy their cleared lands when the same were offered for sale. Thus while Coffee's primary motive was purely profit and while his operations did not always work to the advantage of the individual settler, his influence was great in the development of the area as a whole. With the know-how and the advantages that his experience brought him, it does not seem unreasonable to believe that if it had not been for the Panic of 1819 and the lean years of the twenties, Coffee would doubtless have become Alabama's first millionaire real estate agent.

⁶⁴ See Andrew Jackson to Coffee, Oct. 4, 1822; Thy Minor to Coffee, July 7, 1824; John Winston to Coffee, Dec. 7, 1825.

Navigational Development of Muscle Shoals, 1807-1890

By ADRIAN G. DANIEL

THROUGHOUT MOST of the Eighteenth Century the Tennessee River served as an important navigational route in the international struggle of European powers for dominance of North America.¹ In fact, the valley was one of the first points of contact between the French and English in their contest for control of the Mississippi Valley. During Queen Anne's War (1702-1713) the English sought to convert the Tennessee River into a military and trade route to the Mississippi Valley and attempted to erect a fort at Muscle Shoals where the French had previously had one.² Following the American Revolution, Muscle Shoals became involved in disaffection and Spanish intrigue, when John Sevier attempted to annex it to his independent State of Franklin in the East Tennessee country.³

During the Colonial Period the fertility of the valley and of

¹ This paper was read at the annual meeting of the Alabama Historical Association, Montgomery, April 21, 1961.

² See Clarence W. Alvord and Lee Bidgood, *The First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region by the Virginians, 1650-1674* (Cleveland, 1912), 209ff.; Samuel C. Williams (ed.), *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country, 1540-1800* (Johnson City, 1928), 21-22, 37; Verner W. Crane, "The Tennessee River as the Road to Carolina: The Beginning of Exploration and Trade," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, III, 3-6, 17-18 (June, 1916); and "The Southern Frontier in Queen Anne's War," *American Historical Review*, XXIV, 379-395 (Apr., 1919).

³ A. P. Whitaker, "Spanish Intrigue in the Old Southwest: An Episode, 1788-89," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XII, 155-176 (Sept., 1925), and "The Muscle Shoals Speculation, 1783-1789," *ibid.*, XIII, 365-386 (Dec., 1926); also see Samuel C. Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin* (New York, 1933), 13-18, and Carl S. Driver, *John Sevier: Pioneer of the Old Southwest* (Chapel Hill, 1932), 33, 70-73.

the Muscle Shoals area in particular increasingly attracted more settlers and land speculators who frequently utilized the river for transportation to the West and to New Orleans. A persistently major obstacle to navigation, however, was the series of hazardous cascades in present Northwest Alabama, collectively known as the Muscle Shoals. Approximately thirty-seven miles in length, the shoals comprised some seven miles of Little Muscle Shoals, fourteen and a half miles of Big Muscle Shoals, and some six miles of Elk River Shoals. Except in periods of high water and floods, the shoals were practically impassable for heavy navigation. Thus hemmed in on the east by the Appalachian Mountains and on the west by the shoals, the valley settlers suffered the dilemma of either an expensive wagon haul in one direction or the hazardous water route in the other. Consequently, their improvement had been of prime concern almost from the time of settlement. The first serious efforts, therefore, to improve the navigation of Muscle Shoals originated with the frontiersmen and land speculators of the Old Southwest, who clamored for navigational improvements in order to form a commercial outlet to the Mississippi Valley.

In the closing days of the Eighteenth Century and the first three decades of the Nineteenth Century, numerous proposals were offered for the development of Muscle Shoals and the construction of canals between the Tennessee River and other rivers to the south. As early as 1799 Zachariah Cox, a speculator in Muscle Shoals lands, proposed the construction of a canal between the Tennessee River and the headwaters of the Tombigbee River in present northeastern Mississippi. Again, in 1807, James Lyon of Tennessee, a candidate for Congress, also proposed a canal between the Tennessee and Tombigbee rivers via Bear Creek, and in the same year a group of frontier settlers from Tennessee and Georgia petitioned Congress to make navigational improvements at Muscle Shoals. Subsequently, in 1810, Senator John Pope of Kentucky introduced

a bill in Congress to provide for the construction of a canal between the Tennessee and Tombigbee rivers. On November 12, 1813 the General Assembly of Tennessee urged a congressional appropriation for the improvement of Muscle Shoals, and on February 4, 1814 the Assembly communicated a memorial to the House of Representatives in this regard. Representative Isaac Thomas of Sparta, Tennessee, introduced a resolution in Congress, December 27, 1816, that requested the Committee on Roads and Canals to appropriate funds for navigational improvements at Muscle Shoals. On March 11, 1818 Representative Francis Jones of Tennessee proposed a program of Federal aid for internal improvements in the interest of "the common defense and general welfare," and included a request for improvements at Muscle Shoals as being of military and commercial advantage to the United States. His request also urged the construction of a canal connecting the Tombigbee and Tennessee rivers as a part of the "American System" advocated by Henry Clay (1777-1852) of Kentucky.⁴ None of these proposals received consideration to the extent of actual construction, but they brought to the attention of Congress the necessity of regional internal improvements in the Muscle Shoals area.

After Alabama had been admitted to the Union in 1819 a number of state officials also proposed internal improvements in the region. In his message of October 26, 1819 the first governor-elect of Alabama, William Wyatt Bibb, recommended a survey to determine the "nearest and most eligible approach which can be made between the waters of the Tennessee and Mobile Rivers." In 1821 Governor Israel Pickens recommended the construction of a canal between the Tennessee

⁴ For the information in this paragraph see William E. Martin, "Internal Improvements in Alabama," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, XX (4), 35-36 (Apr., 1902); Stanley J. Folmsbee, *Sectionalism and Internal Improvements in Tennessee, 1796-1845* (Knoxville, 1939), 38, 40, 42-44; and *Annals of Congress*, 11 Cong., 2 Sess., 522-525, 613 (Jan. 5, March 21, 1810); *ibid.*, 14 Cong., 2 Sess., 368 (Dec. 27, 1816); *ibid.*, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., 1274-1282 (March 11, 1818).

and Alabama rivers, and on January 11, 1827 the Alabama legislature passed an act incorporating the Alabama and Tennessee Canal Company for the purpose of constructing a canal between the Tennessee and Coosa rivers, but no funds were appropriated for the project. Finally, in December, 1839 Governor Arthur B. Bagby expressed to the legislature a desire to see Mobile Bay and the Tennessee River connected by means of a canal.⁵

The first construction project at Muscle Shoals began at the instigation of the United States Government and was subsequently undertaken by the State of Alabama as sort of a co-operative enterprise. On April 30, 1824 Congress approved a bill authorizing surveys to determine location of roads and canals that would be of national importance in regard to commercial and military purposes. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun (1782-1850) of South Carolina then ordered an extensive investigation conducted and submitted a report to President James Monroe, December 3, 1824, in which he recommended navigational improvements of Muscle Shoals by the Federal government as one of three proposed projects. The report stressed the strategic military significance and national economic importance of the development of Muscle Shoals as a means of uniting the eastern settlements with the western frontier.⁶

In compliance with this report, the United States Army Corps of Engineers conducted a survey of Muscle Shoals in 1827 and pointed out that its improvement would open the river for navigation from Knoxville, Tennessee to the Ohio and Mississippi valleys.⁷ The survey was particularly noteworthy in that it suggested for the first time the development

⁵ Martin, XX (4), 34, 37-38, 40 (Apr., 1902).

⁶ Richard K. Cralle (ed.), *Reports and Public Letters of John C. Calhoun* (New York, 1856), V, 143-146.

⁷ U. S. 20 Cong., 1 Sess., *House Doc.* 284, "Survey of the Muscle Shoals," 18-20 (May 14, 1828).

of the entire Tennessee River as one unified project. Three years later, in 1830, the Corps of Engineers conducted another survey of the Tennessee River, including its eastern tributaries, and recommended the construction of a canal from Brown's Island, above Elk River Shoals, to Florence, a distance of some thirty-five or forty miles. With the approval of President Andrew Jackson, the Corps of Engineers also recommended construction of two navigation dams at the present sites of the Wilson and Wheeler dams.⁸

In the meantime, proposals for Federal aid for internal improvements were generating less enthusiasm as that responsibility was shifting to the individual states and to private concerns. Congress then granted Alabama 400,000 acres of Federal lands in North Alabama, May 23, 1828, for the purpose of financing improvements at Muscle Shoals.⁹ Unfortunately, the congressional grant stipulated that any surplus funds remaining from the sale of these lands were to be applied to the improvement of navigation on the Coosa, Cahawba, and Black Warrior rivers. This clause may have generated sectional controversy between legislators from the central and southern section of Alabama and those from the Tennessee Valley. Seemingly, efforts were made to acquire part of the funds assigned to the Muscle Shoals project and apply these toward navigational improvement on the other three rivers. One thing is quite clear, however. A lack of sufficient funds from the sale of the lands forced Alabama to restrict the project to a shorter canal than the one which had been recommended by the Corps of Engineers.

This revised plan, designated the Tennessee Canal project, called for a canal fourteen and a half miles in length around Big Muscle Shoals. No provisions were made for Little Muscle

⁸ U. S. 29 Cong., 1 Sess., *House Doc.* 167, "Survey of the Tennessee River," 2, 7, 16 (March 17, 1846).

⁹ 4 *United States Statutes at Large*, IV, 290; *American State Papers: Public Lands* (Washington, 1860), VI, 139.

Shoals and Elk River Shoals. Between 1831 and 1836 Alabama constructed the Tennessee Canal around Big Muscle Shoals at a total cost of \$644,594.71. The canal was sixty feet wide and six feet deep and contained seventeen navigation locks. Unfortunately, the canal was never placed in successful operation. The Panic of 1837 precipitated a drastic slump in land sales and forced the abandonment of a large number of internal improvement projects. Alabama, therefore, was compelled to abandon the Tennessee Canal in 1837 for lack of operating and maintenance funds.¹⁰

Meanwhile, construction began about 1832 on the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad around the Muscle Shoals in order to give the planters above the shoals access to markets in the Mississippi Valley. Local interest, however, continued for further Muscle Shoals improvements. At a meeting in Tuscumbia, April 17, 1846, a resolution was drawn up requesting Federal aid for this purpose. The resolution stated that the Tennessee River was of greater national importance than the Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and Red rivers, for which government aid had been rendered, in that seven Southern states depended upon the river as a navigational outlet.¹¹

Following the War Between the States, industrial growth in the Chattanooga district revived the desirability of navigational improvements at Muscle Shoals, and renewed interest was stimulated in Congress toward this end.¹² The first post-war examination of the river at this locality was made in 1867. Major Walter McFarland then conducted a survey of Muscle Shoals in 1872 (revised by a survey of 1877) and recommended

¹⁰ U. S. 25 Cong., 2 Sess., *House Rep.* 985, "Canal Around the Muscle Shoals of the River Tennessee," 2, 9, 12, 15, 18 (June 27, 1938); *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army . . . 1890* (Washington, 1890), III, 21114.

¹¹ *North Alabamian* (Tuscumbia), Apr. 17, 1846.

¹² Industrial development was so rapid that by 1877 Chattanoogaans boasted that "their town was the Pittsburgh of the South" (Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufacturers in the United States* [New York, 1929], II, 213).

the navigational improvement of three sections of the shoals. McFarland proposed construction of a canal, designated the Muscle Shoals Canal, fourteen and a half miles long around Big Muscle Shoals to replace the defunct Tennessee Canal. This project would contain nine navigation locks with a total lift capacity of eighty-five feet. The other two proposed projects consisted of another canal at Elk River Shoals and a navigation channel at Little Muscle Shoals. The canal at Elk River Shoals was to be one and a half miles in length and include two locks with a total lift of twenty-three feet. Construction began on the Muscle Shoals Canal in December, 1875, but work did not begin on the other two projects until late 1877.¹³

Two important figures in obtaining adequate congressional appropriations for the projects at Muscle Shoals were English industrialist James Bowron, Jr. (1844-1928) of the Southern States Coal, Iron and Land Company, Limited, South Pittsburgh, Tennessee, and later an official in the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, and former Confederate General Joseph Wheeler (1836-1906) of Alabama, a member of the House of Representatives. On January 22, 1878 Bowron lobbied all day in Washington in behalf of Muscle Shoals, and appeared before the House Committee on Commerce, January 23 and 24, to urge liberal Federal appropriations for Muscle Shoals improvements. Bowron's firm was interested in obtaining a trade route to the Middle West pig iron markets. After discussing the Muscle Shoals project with President Rutherford B. Hayes, industrialist A. S. Hewitt of New York City, Senator John T. Morgan of Alabama, Colonel E. W. Cole of Nashville, and the Chief of Engineers, Bowron privately expressed his reassurance of continued construction on the project.¹⁴

¹³ *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers . . . 1890*, III, 21114-21115.

¹⁴ James Bowron Diary No. 2, Jan. 22, 23, 24, 1878 (MSS in the University of Alabama Library, University, Ala.). Encouraged by Southern promoters and Northern financiers, Bowron's father, an English geologist and metallurgist from Stockton-on-

With the support and interest of Representative Joseph Wheeler, the leading exponent in Congress for Muscle Shoals and Tennessee River development, Congress appropriated sufficient funds for the Corps of Engineers to complete the Muscle Shoals Canal and open it for public use on November 10, 1890. Total cost of the canal was \$3,191,726.50.¹⁵

Final completion of the Muscle Shoals Canal signalized a milestone in Tennessee River development, and at the same time marked the close of efforts for development of the river solely as a navigational enterprise. Future projects were to be undertaken in conjunction with hydro-electric power development, and the existence of the Muscle Shoals Canal was destined to play a minor but significant role in retaining government interest in the multiple-purpose development of the Tennessee River.¹⁶

Tees, England, and Colonel Babcock of New York visited the Chattanooga district in April, 1874 and organized the Southern States Company. The Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company purchased the Southern States Company, February 1, 1882, and in 1907 the Tennessee Company was absorbed by the United States Steel Corporation through the manipulation of the financial firm of J. P. Morgan and Company.

¹⁵ *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers . . . 1891* (Washington, 1891), I, 287.

¹⁶ For this view see Adrian G. Daniel, "J. W. Worthington, Promoter of Muscle Shoals Power," *Alabama Review*, XII, 196-208 (July, 1959).

A Federal Raid Into Southeast Alabama

By ALLEN W. JONES

WHEN ALABAMA joined the Confederacy in 1861, the citizens of the state never expected to experience an invasion by Union troops.¹ Most people in the state thought the war would be over within a year and they all believed that the fighting would be confined to the Upper South and to the Border States. Alabama was protected on all sides by sister Confederate states. The Gulf coast area around Mobile was the only area exposed to the enemy and this was easily defended by fortifications around Mobile Bay. The people of Alabama believed they were secure from enemy invasion.²

During the first year of the war Governor A. B. Moore and his staff did not seem very concerned with a plan of defense for the state and spent their efforts supplying the Confederacy with men and supplies.³ In February, 1862 the war became a reality for the citizens of Alabama, when a Federal raiding expedition sailed up the Tennessee River to Florence. The arrival of Union troops on the "sacred soil" of Alabama greatly alarmed the public and they flooded the Governor's office with demands for protection. In the spring and summer of 1862

¹ This paper was read at the annual meeting of the Alabama Historical Association, Montgomery, April 21, 1961.

² Albert B. Moore, *History of Alabama* (University, Ala., 1934), 428-429; L. D. Miller, *History of Alabama* (Birmingham, 1901), 154-156.

³ See the Governor A. B. Moore Papers (Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery); *Alabama Acts*, 1861 (Montgomery, 1862). Moore reported that Alabama had furnished 27,000 men to the armies of the Confederacy by October 7, 1861.

Governor John Gill Shorter focused his strength and attention on driving the enemy from North Alabama.⁴

While Union troops spread the horrors of war through North Alabama, the people in South Alabama were alarmed by the enemy's capture and occupation of New Orleans and Pensacola.⁵ Governor Shorter attempted to calm the fears in the Gulf coast region by announcing his intentions to organize a large military force "to repel invasion and to place Mobile in a state of defense." He proposed to recruit sixty companies of volunteer "minute men" from the counties of Southwest Alabama. The Governor made no mention, however, of using this force for the protection of any area of the state, except Mobile.⁶ By the late summer of 1862 the defenses of that city had been made almost impregnable and all the Federal troops had retired from North Alabama. This gave Shorter an opportunity to turn his attention to the defenseless area of Southeast Alabama.⁷

The counties of Covington, Coffee, Dale, and Henry, with the adjoining part of Northwest Florida, were generally poor and sparsely populated. This region, which contained many swamps, caves, and dense thickets, had become a hiding place for deserters, runaway slaves, Tories and conscripts.⁸ During the fall and winter of 1862 Shorter and Governor John Milton of Florida made appeals to the Confederate Government for

⁴ Miller, 158-170; Moore, 430-431.

⁵ James G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, 1937), 579; Julien C. Yonge, "Pensacola in the War for Southern Independence," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII, 357-360 (Jan., Apr., 1959).

⁶ Columbus (Ga.) *Weekly Enquirer*, March 18, 1862.

⁷ Walter L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (Cleveland, 1911), 69; Miller, 164.

⁸ Shorter to James A. Seddon, Jan. 14, 1863 (in Shorter Papers, Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery); Fred S. Watson, *Piney Wood Echoes, A History of Dale and Coffee Counties, Alabama* (Elba, 1949), 141-142; Bessie Martin, *Desertion of Alabama Troops From the Confederate Army* (New York, 1932), 49-50.

the protection of this area.⁹ The Secretary of War responded to these demands with the assignment of Brigadier General Howell Cobb to a new command, the Department of Middle Florida, with boundaries extending from the Suwannee River to the Choctawhatchee River.¹⁰

Governor Shorter, convinced that a more positive program of defense was needed, on November 4, 1862 appealed directly to President Jefferson Davis for the formation of a new military department to be composed of thirty counties in Southeast Alabama, Northwest Florida and Southwest Georgia.¹¹

In the meantime, Brigadier General Cobb assumed command of the District of Middle Florida. After making an examination of the territory, he informed General Pierre G. T. Beauregard that it would be impossible to defend the 140 miles between the Suwannee and Choctawhatchee rivers with the small number of troops which he had.¹²

The Union forces that operated along the Gulf coast and around Pensacola were aware of the inadequate Confederate defenses in the area and in November, 1862 Acting Master Elias D. Bruner, commander of the blockading schooner *Charlotte*, and Lieutenant James H. Stewart of the Ninety-First New York Volunteers, who was stationed in Pensacola, made plans to send a raiding expedition up the Choctawhatchee River. The purpose was to seize a steamship called the

⁹ Shorter to Seddon, Sept. 22, 1862, in *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1880-1907), 1, XIV, 630 (hereinafter *ORA*).

¹⁰ See Horace Montgomery, *Howell Cobb's Confederate Career*, Confederate Centennial Studies, No. 10 (Tuscaloosa, 1959), 99 ff.; *ORA*, 1, XIV, 677.

¹¹ This proposal was endorsed by Governors Joseph Brown of Georgia and John Milton of Florida. It suggested that the states of Alabama, Georgia and Florida be authorized to call for six months' volunteers from among "those not subject to conscription and those subject to conscription between the ages of thirty-five and forty-five years." The regiments organized under this authority would be turned over to the Confederate Government which would appoint a commander for the group (*ibid.*, 1, XIV, 716-717).

¹² *Ibid.*, 1, XIV, 702-705, 737-738.

Bloomer which was anchored about one hundred miles inland. Stewart agreed to furnish a detachment of twenty-five soldiers and Bruner promised to provide the necessary naval personnel to put the *Bloomer* in order and return it down the Choctawhatchee.¹³

On December 17 Stewart and his men joined Bruner and the crew of the *Charlotte*, which was anchored at East Pass near the east end of Santa Rose Island, and, after securing extra boats, arms and ammunition from the U.S.S. *Potomac*, moved across Choctawhatchee Bay to La Grange Bayou where they camped the evening of December 24. While there, the raiders were joined by a Mr. Jones, formerly of Geneva, Alabama, a licensed United States ship pilot.¹⁴

On Christmas morning Bruner sent Stewart and Master's Mate Edward Crissey with two boats of soldiers to Four-Mile Landing at the extreme eastern end of Choctawhatchee Bay. This advance party was ordered to seize all the horses and teams it could find. Later the same morning Bruner moved the main body of the expedition forward, leaving the vessel at La Grange Bayou in charge of Coxswain Nathan S. Mallory and five men. When Bruner arrived at Four-Mile Landing, the advance party had secured a number of horses and teams which were used to pull the howitzer and carry the provisions. By three o'clock in the afternoon the expedition had unloaded the gun, ammunition, and supplies from the *Charlotte* and were ready to push forward. They traveled sixteen miles before camping for the night.¹⁵

Early in the morning of December 26 the raiders broke

¹³ *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (Washington, 1894-1927), 1, XIX, 425-426 (hereinafter ORN). The *Bloomer* was a 130-ton sidewheeler with high pressure engines. She was armed with one 32-pound gun and one 12-pound gun. Her owner is not known and the reason for the ship's location in the Choctawhatchee River is a mystery. She is believed to have been built in New Albany in 1856 (*ibid.*, 2, I, 46).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1, XIX, 425-426.

¹⁵ *Montgomery Weekly Mail*, Jan. 14, 1863.

camp and marched rapidly northward. They halted in the afternoon within seventeen miles of Geneva. From this point Bruner sent out a scouting patrol to ascertain whether the route was clear and whether the steamship *Bloomer* was afloat. One of the scouts returned to state that she lay one mile below Geneva and that no enemy troops were in the vicinity.

At three o'clock the next morning, December 27, Crissey and twenty men moved ahead and by daylight had located Stewart and boarded the *Bloomer* without being discovered. A few hours later Bruner arrived with the main body of the raiding expedition. Pilot Jones and the engineers quickly determined that the ship could be put in running order within twenty-four hours. Bruner immediately put his crew to work while Stewart and his men guarded the operation.

The engineers and mechanics labored throughout the night and by eight o'clock Sunday morning, December 28, reported everything was ready to move. But when the engine was fired, they discovered a hole in one of the boilers. This unexpected event delayed action until three o'clock in the afternoon.¹⁶

The citizens of Geneva did not discover the presence of the raiding party until Sunday morning, when the engine of the *Bloomer* was fired. H. W. Laird, a prominent Genevan, began immediately to organize a force to attack the "Yankee Invaders." By night he had assembled about two hundred and fifty men.¹⁷ Laird suggested that they pursue the raiders who were now on their way down the Choctawhatchee River towards Florida, in the *Bloomer*. Colonel B. W. Starke, Judge J. G. Moore and others from Elba quibbled as to the propriety of going out of the state. Other citizens opposed the pursuit because they did not have horses and weapons. Starke reminded

¹⁶ *ORN*, 1, XIX, 425-426.

¹⁷ Geneva County was not established until December 26, 1868. The town of Geneva was located in Coffee County during the war and it had a population of 126—22 Negroes and 104 whites. See W. Brewer, *Alabama: Her History, Resources, War Record and Public Men from 1540-1872* (Montgomery, 1872), 258.

the crowd that their only effective weapon was a 4-pound signal gun and "whenever it fired, hoards of Yankees would probably surround us and take us all prisoners." This threw the men into confusion and the emergency army quickly lost its aggressiveness. And when Laird announced that he was going to give chase to the invaders, only seventy-eight volunteers agreed to follow him. His plan of pursuit was hastily abandoned when it was discovered that less than half of his followers had horses and guns.¹⁸

In the meantime, the Federal raiders aboard the *Bloomer* steamed slowly down the river towards Choctawhatchee Bay. The trip took almost three days and was described by Bruner as "one of the very worst rivers I have ever been in." On December 30 the *Bloomer* arrived safely alongside the *Charlotte* in La Grange Bayou. Bruner divided his crew and both ships weighed anchor. Lieutenant Stewart and his men were delivered to Pensacola and the *Bloomer* was turned over to the United States Navy.

Brigadier General Neal Dow, commander at Pensacola, sent a caustic protest to Rear Admiral D. G. Farragut, commander of the Gulf Squadron, United States Navy, regarding Bruner's claim to the *Bloomer* as a prize of war, stating that the *Bloomer* was the rightful prize of the Army and that Bruner had taken the ship illegally. The General's account of the raid described Stewart and his men as the organizers, directors, and heroes of the capture. Farragut promptly replied that he would order an investigation of the disputed prize of war.¹⁹

While the United States Army and Navy debated the ownership of the *Bloomer*, Governor Shorter made preparations for the defense of Southeast Alabama. Governor Milton of Florida wired Shorter that "an enemy force of 250 with artillery had captured and burned Geneva and was advancing on Elba,"

¹⁸ Laird to Shorter, Jan. 6, 1863 (Shorter Papers).

¹⁹ *ORN*, 1, XIX, 425-428; *ORA*, 1, XV, 629.

adding that Tories, deserters, and Negroes were joining the enemy and that it would take at least "one thousand men to protect this part of west Florida and south Alabama." Shorter immediately appointed Colonel James H. Clanton a special aide-de-camp and ordered him to the region "to repel the invasion." Clanton left Montgomery on December 30 and arrived in Elba two days later, "authorized to call volunteers, cavalry and infantry, and, if need be, to order out any number of militia companies in Dale and Coffee Counties, and in the name of the Governor of Alabama, to provide arms, ammunition, subsistence, and quartermaster's stores by purchase or impressment."²⁰

On December 31, 1862 Shorter wired Major General S. B. Buckner, commander of the District of the Gulf with headquarters in Mobile, to send a company of cavalry and a battery of artillery across the state to intercept and cut off the Geneva raiding expedition. Buckner promptly directed his chief of staff to lead a heavy cavalry force with artillery from Pollard through Andalusia to Geneva.²¹

By the time the Confederate troops from Pollard arrived in Geneva, Clanton had formed a company of cavalry rangers. During January, 1863 this combined force operated in Northwest Florida, arresting Union sympathizers and deserters and seizing or destroying their property. The operations of this force around Choctawhatchee Bay brought alarm to the United States Gulf Squadron. Acting Master Bruner, who was still stationed in Choctawhatchee Bay, notified Admiral Farragut that a force of "800 rebel cavalry and infantry, led by Colonel Clanton," was preparing to attack. The attack never occurred.²²

²⁰ Telegrams, Benjamin Porter, S. Mabry, and John Milton to Shorter, Dec. 29, 30, 31, 1862 (Military Records Division, Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery); *ORA*, 1, LII (2), 401-402; Shorter to Milton, Jan. 10, 1863 (Shorter Papers).

²¹ *ORA*, 1, LII (2), 402; Buckner to Shorter, Jan. 2, 1863 (Shorter Papers).

²² Troy (Ala.) *Southern Advertiser*, Jan. 28, 1863; *ORN*, 1, XIX, 574-575.

Several Alabama newspapers carried vague and exaggerated accounts of the Geneva raid. The *Selma Morning Reporter* concluded, January 2, 1865, that it was "intended as a feint to draw off our troops from Mobile or some other important point." The *Troy Southern Advertiser* was of the opinion that the enemy was trying to establish himself at the head of the Choctawhatchee River for the purpose of harassing all of Southeast Alabama.²³ The *Montgomery Weekly Mail* was the most optimistic. Its editor noted that no damage had been done by the enemy and that, therefore, the purpose of the raid was probably "to reconnoitre the country and perhaps steal chickens and pigs for the Christmas festivities."²⁴

This brief, bold raid into Southeast Alabama did a great deal more than frighten the citizens. Governor Shorter and others responsible for the defense of the state were suddenly made aware that their back door was open to the enemy. On January 10, 1863 Shorter wrote to President Davis, describing the situation and requesting his co-operation in establishing a proper defense. He informed him that he had instructed Clanton "to raise and muster into the service of the state, for thirty days, a force adequate to drive out the enemy and protect the southeast corner of the state." In an effort to hasten the formation of the emergency force, he continued, he had authorized Clanton to include in his enlistment men in Covington, Coffee, Dale, Henry, Pike and Barbour counties who were liable to conscription. He expressed belief that many of the men who were evading conscription would promptly enlist in the state service for thirty days. He recalled that Clanton had earlier received authority from the War Department "to raise for six months' service, a regiment of cavalry to be composed of men not subject to conscription and to be employed in the 'defense of the Coast of Alabama and Florida, west of

²³ Jan. 7, 1863.

²⁴ Dec. 31, 1862.

the Apalachicola River'." In conclusion, he suggested that Clanton be permitted to enlist companies or smaller numbers instead of a complete regiment, because of the shortage of able-bodied men.²⁵

In order to insure prompt action, Governor Shorter detailed his brother, Colonel Eli S. Shorter, as a special aide and sent him directly to Richmond to visit the President. In late January Colonel Shorter met with Davis and with Secretary of War James A. Seddon. The meeting resulted in the approval of all of Shorter's proposals. The President pointed out in his approval that the conscripts taken into Clanton's organizations would be "held subject to the acts of conscription whenever the demand for service elsewhere became necessary."²⁶

Armed with full authority, Clanton launched a vigorous recruiting campaign. He proceeded so rapidly that his authority was extended to other counties through South Alabama, and he was permitted to enlarge his command to a brigade. The work continued until September, 1863 and, when it was completed, Clanton's Brigade included forty companies. As a reward for his fine work, Clanton was commissioned a brigadier-general on November 16, 1863. What had begun as a small force for the protection of Southeast Alabama, had become one of Alabama's greatest contributions to the Confederate cause.²⁷

While Governor Shorter planned his defense, the captured *Bloomer* was christened the U. S. *Bloomer* and assigned to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron. She served along the

²⁵ *ORA*, 1, LII (2), 411; *ibid.*, 1, XV, 939-940; *Montgomery Weekly Advertiser*, Jan. 1, 1863.

²⁶ *ORA*, 1, XV, 939-948; *ibid.*, 1, LII (2), 411, 414-415.

²⁷ Clanton's Brigade included the 57th Alabama Regiment Infantry, the 61st Alabama Regiment Infantry, 6th Alabama Regiment Cavalry, 7th Alabama Regiment Cavalry, Clanton's Battery, and Tarrant's Battery (in Clanton Folder, Military Records Division of the Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery); see William Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama for Thirty Years* (Atlanta, 1872), 632-645.

northwest coast of Florida until June, 1865, at which time she was wrecked and sunk in East Pass, off Santa Rosa Island, Florida.

When the case of the *Bloomer* came before the United States Claims Court at New Orleans, February, 1864, the prize was awarded to Master Bruner and his crew. The United States paid \$5,100 for ship. Eighteen months later, on September 22, 1865, the *Bloomer* was sold to S. P. Griffin Company, Woolsey, Florida, for \$1,500.²⁸

²⁸ *ORN*, 1, XX, 718-719; *ibid.*, 1, XXI, 120, 744; *ibid.*, 1, XXII, 3, 12, 25, 38, 56, 106, 118, 120, 128, 171, 188, 212, 230, 256; *ibid.*, 2, I, 46.

Notes and Documents

LETTERS RELATING TO THE TRAGEDY OF FORT MIMS: AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1813

Edited by JAMES F. DOSTER

With the danger of Indian attack in the air in the late summer of 1813, the terrified settlers of the Tombigbee-Tensaw country barricaded themselves in crude palisade forts.¹ One of these fortifications, on Lake Tensaw,² was built around the domicile of Sam Mims. The fort was garrisoned by a sizeable contingent of Mississippi Territorial militia under the command of Major Daniel Beasley, who was fatally careless and left the gate of the fort open. In one of the greatest tragedies of the American frontier Beasley and several hundred others lost their lives before the onslaught of a body of Creek Indians.

Documents in the J. F. H. Claiborne Collection in the Mississippi State Department of Archives and History (Jackson) reveal vividly how the situation developed which permitted the Indians to do their horrible work.³ First is a letter showing how Daniel Beasley, a lawyer of Jefferson County, M. T., received his appointment as major, under the urging of his friend, Brigadier General Ferdinand L. Claiborne of the Mississippi Territorial militia.

Soldiers Retreat [near Natchez], Feby. 15, 1813

Dear Sir

I have but recently been informed by Col. Wood in person, that, owing to the death of his Fatherinlaw, the ill state of health of his Wife & a Brotherinlaw, and his own private Concerns, he cannot continue

¹ Publication of these documents is a result of research conducted by the editor with the financial aid of the University of Alabama Research Committee.

² This body of water, now known as Boatyard Lake, fills an old river channel of the Alabama River, with which river it is connected by a boatable passage.

³ Unless otherwise indicated, all manuscripts cited are in this collection.

in the Volunteer Service. By his resignation the Service will lose a most valuable officer; but my regret for losing his personal aid, his good council & friendly advice is much lessened when I reflect that I have it in my power to advance You to an honorable and dignified Station in the ranks of Your Country. No one could feel more sensibly than myself the loss I am about to sustain, in not having you in my family near my person, giving Your aid & council; but to advance the interests of the regiment, and to promote Your standing in the army of volunteers, I lay aside all personal consideration, I drop every selfish wish, and beg Your acceptance of a majority, the commission for which is enclosed. Major Carson who was next in command to Col. Wood will succeed him. I anxiously wish a personal conference with You as soon as possible. I will leave this place on Sunday next, therefore hope You will be with me previous to that time to consult on many things important to the service.

I am Dear Sir with

Friendship & respect
Your obdt. Sevt.
Ferdinand L. Claiborne
Brig. Gen.

Majr. D. Beasley

When General Claiborne arrived at Fort Stoddert from Natchez on August 1, 1813,⁴ he found that the local militia had already fought an indecisive engagement (the Battle of Burnt Corn) with the Creek Indians on the Wolf Path to Pensacola. Claiborne dispatched Major Beasley to take command at Fort Mims, fourteen miles to the east and across two rivers from Fort Stoddert. A few days later Beasley wrote his commanding officer:

Mims's Block House 6 Aug. 1813

D Sir.

The Detachment under my command arrived here the day after we left the cantonment [at Mount Vernon, three miles west of Fort Stoddert] without any accident or occurrence worth relating. I Have viewed the country around, and have determined to continue at this place.

⁴ Fort Stoddert was located on the west bank of the Mobile River, a short distance above the point where the waters of the Tensaw River diverge from those of the Mobile. In 1813 the area was in the Mississippi Territory.

Upon my arrival here we found upwards of twenty volunteer militia doing duty. I issued an order that they would be allowed to draw rations, and ordered an election for them to choose their officers; they voted unanimously for Mr. Bailey for capt.⁵ Two Ensigns of militia Dunn & Plummer had acted as their officers; they were both in the late engagement [Battle of Burnt Corn] and acted cowardly. Dunn declined being a Candidate; and though on the first vote for an ensign there was no opponent named against Plummer he did not get a majority of the whole of the votes; the majority stood in their ranks; many of them manifested a Wish for one of the young Randals, a half breed who was also in the engagement and behaved bravely, to become a candidate, but he very modestly declined. They then prevailed on a Mr. Crawford, an untried man, and he was elected. I told them in orders that when the company should so increase as to make more officers necessary, they should be elected in the same way. We have no hostile indians about as yet but it is believed by the Inhabitants here that they will come. We have received information here from a Source that the Inhabitants confide in; they knowing the man through whom it comes; that the big Warrior has made his way into Georgia.⁶

I am with high consideration

Your most obedient

Daniel Beasley

Next day Beasley wrote Claiborne again:

Mims Block House 7th Augt. 1813.

D Sir

We have nothing new since I wrote you yesterday.

We have a number of men on fatigue now and will have for some time: Could we be furnished with Whisky to give them an extra gill in such a case as has been usual, they expect it; and I allowed it to them yesterday, out of the Whisky Composing a part of the rations drawn and brought here, in expectation that it may be replaced. If you think it right to allow the extra gill to fatigue men an opportunity offers to send it up by Doctor Osborne.

I have sent down a return for a drum it is to be used by one of the

⁵ Dixon Bailey, an educated half-breed, died a hero's death in the defense of Fort Mims.

⁶ The Big Warrior (Tustunugee Thluco) was a leader of the friendly Creeks. Chief William McIntosh (Tustunugee Hutkee) had recently rescued him and his followers from Tuckabatchee and taken them to safety at Coweta, on the east bank of the Chattahoochee River.

militia who beats exceedingly well having been in the regular Service for five years.

Yours with highest respect
D. Beasley Maj.
Commg.

P. S. I was in an error in Stating to you in my letter of Yesterday that Dunn the Ensign of Militia was in the engagement. I have since understood that he could not be got out.

D B.

On August 7 General Claiborne visited Fort Mims. He inspected the fortifications and gave the following orders to Beasley:

Mimms's Station 7th August 1813

Sir/

Considering the situation of the Frontier of this Territory exceedingly exposed, particularly the settlement you have been detached to guard, you are requested to enroll every citizen that is willing to perform duty and form them into Companies. On thirty persons enrolling allow them the privilege of appointing their own Captain & an Ensign & should forty five enroll give them the privilege of electing a Lieutenant & for a complete Company of seventy six add a 2d. Lieutenant to their number of officers, to serve for three months unless sooner discharged by the Commanding General of the 7th Military District.

You will proceed to muster such men as may enroll as "Volunteer militia belonging to the Mississippi Territory & serving under the orders & with the Volunteers Commanded by Brigadier Genl. Ferdinand L. Claiborne" To such as you may enroll you will direct issue of rations on the return of the commanding officer of the Company countersigned by yourself. On the subject of pay I can only say that I will transmit the Muster Roll to the Honorable the Secy of War & for the decision of the Government but am not authorized to assure it myself. The patriotism exhibited on this exposed Frontier by the enrollment of the young men will be highly appreciated by the Government & I think it more than probable that they will be received as militia regularly called into service & paid accordingly. I am pleased, after taking into view all the advantages incident to this place, at your continuance at it with your command, & recommend to you to strengthen the picketing & to build at least two other block Houses. To respect our Enemy, & to prepare in the best possible way to meet him, is the certain means

to ensure success. I am not fully satisfied that a Block house may not be necessary at four places to secure the landing of provisions & to afford storage until it can be brought to this place. You will reflect on the subject & be prepared to determine on the place in a few days. An answer from Genl. Flournoy will determine as to the duration of your continuance at this place. You will frequently send out scouts & should they fall in with any part of the Creeks within the limits of our Territory not positively known to be friendly, they must be considered enemies & treated accordingly.

Messrs Wm & John Pierce I understand are erecting a Stockade near this at their Mills.⁷ Should you deem it necessary you may give a guard to be Commanded by a Commissioned Officer for the protection of the citizens that may repair there for safety—to Friendly Indians & families really in distress you are [at] liberty to give provisions, being careful that the supply be as small as circumstances will admit of.

To persons bearing dispatches, you will issue forage & provisions. The health of your men must be an object of your particular attention as I hope soon our orders and force will authorize entering the Creek nation & afford an opportunity to punish those Fanatics in their Towns that have ventured to disturb our frontiers. To such Teams as the Citizens may give you the use of you will furnish with forage you will also Cause every exertion to be made to put the Dragoon horses in order to take the field. The purchase of Forrage must be made by the Officer appointed to do the duty of Quarter Master, and regular vouchers taken by him—showing the quantity purchased its cost & how & for what purpose expended.

General Claiborne, in later disavowing responsibility for the massacre at Fort Mims, cited the above communication to indicate that he had given orders to Major Beasley to strengthen the fortifications at the fort. However, Beasley, a former political associate, was Claiborne's own appointee, and the instructions appear to have been followed up in no way by the general. Claiborne's own superior officer was Brigadier General Thomas Flournoy, of the United States Army, who was in command of the Seventh Military District. His opinion of Claiborne's discipline and control of his subordinate officers

The Pierce brothers lived on Pine Log Creek, three miles from Sam Mims's place.

is revealed in the following excerpt from his letter to Claiborne from the Bay of St. Louis, dated August 10, 1813:

Permit me to say to you that I fear you are too loose in the management of your Officers. Several are absent from their posts without leave from me, or yourself. Several have been permitted to hand you their resignations, have retired from the Service & yet have a place in your last report as in Service—and one at least of your Officers have been promoted in your Service whose resignation I have sent on to the War department. My Dear General these things will not do. Believe me, you will render yourself more popular as an Officer, & as a man, by making every man in your Service attend to his duty & by demanding Courts Martial from me in every Case of delinquency.

Major Beasley wrote Claiborne again on August 12:

Mims's Block House 12th Augt. 1813

Sir

I Just now received by a Dragoon yours of this date sent by express; and immediately gave the information of the desertion of the Indian to Capt. Bailey with instructions to endeavor to retake him. I am truly sorry for the accident.

The men belonging to Capt. Dent's Company here, will be sent on to morrow but it is with regret that I send them as it weakens my command very much and Lieut Bowman having enlisted the most of the men, and having also been at a deal of pains and trouble in disciplining them, he thinks hard of their being taken from him. One of our Soldiers died the night before last and from the report enclosed you will see that we have a good many on the Sick report; but none of them dangerous We are perfectly tranquil here, and are progressing in our works as well as can be expected considering the want of tools, *we shall probably finish the Stockade to morrow.*

With the highest respect
I am yours &c.
D. Beasley Majr.
Commg Station

P. S. Ensign Swann arrived today, and brought two barrels of flour and a bbl Whisky, instead of one of flour, pork and Whisky each as you wrote me. D B.

Again on August 14 Beasley wrote Claiborne:

D Sir

I just now recd. yours of this date and immediately ordered Lt. Bowman to be in readiness to Join Capt. Dent's company to morrow at Cantonment Mount Vernon—Mr. Chambliss will do the duties of Qr. Master as well as those of adjutant. *There was an alarm here yesterday, but I believe entirely a false one; a boy of Mr. Manac's lost his horse in the Swamp,*⁸ and said that he saw Indians. The Swamp was Scoured, but no Indians found; there were appearances of a canoe having been put over the river, which was thought to have been done by Indians; but it was all, I believe, a mistake. The Horse has been found to day. At the time of receiving your dispatch, Mr. Pierce & Mr. Tate was with me on the Subject of furnishing a guard;⁹ at the Mill, I will send one there to night. Capt. Bailey has as many men as to entitle his Company to a Lieutenant. I have ordered an election for that purpose this evening. The evening before last I was informed that Ensign Crawford of Capt. Bailey's company once deserted from the army of the United States; there was positive proof of the fact, and when I spoke to him on the Subject, he admitted it; Whereupon I dismissed him, and ordered an election to fill the vacancy Peter Randon, son of the Old man to whom I introduced you, when here, was elected.

As many as 8 or 10 of Capt Bailey's company are without arms; and there are some Citizens at Mr. Pierce's Mill without also. If you could furnish from 20 to 30 muskets for the purpose of arming them I shall be glad. Also Mr. Tate requested me to endeavor to procure two rifles if possible for him and Mr. Manac, he said he had spoken to you on the subject.

I shall send down to the Cantonment [Mount Vernon] on to morrow a few men on command for the purpose of bringing up some articles that the officers and Soldiers are in want of and to fetch up the boat that Mr. Mayes took his party down in, by whom an opportunity will offer to send up the arms &c

I am with sincere
respect Your observt.
Daniel Beasley Maj.
Commg. Station.

⁸ Sam McNac (alias Manac or Moniac) was a well-known half-breed who kept a rest house on the Federal Road to Georgia.

⁹ David Tate, a half-breed, was a half-brother of William Weatherford (Red Eagle), a leader of the hostile Creeks. Tate had a plantation a few miles to the north of Sam Mims's place.

That an Indian attack was soon to be made in force was generally anticipated, but General Claiborne was led to believe that the attack would be made upon Fort Easley.¹⁰ That attacks on other points might also be made appears to have been appreciated. The following documents indicate the impression on the Tombigbee of what was to be expected from the Indians

Fort Madison Augt. 23d. 1813¹¹

Statement made by Hugh Cassity

On the 21st Inst. a Chaktaw Indian Known by the Name of Bakers hunter came in to Easlys fort and Told that in Six days at farthest from that time the Creeks would be down and would Attack their fort that a part of the Creeks were then embodied at a little Chaktaw Town about twelve or fifteen Miles above the line,¹² the Chaktaw said from the best information he could get about four hundred Creek Indians would come down against the whites, the Indian appeared Much Alarmed Said the White people were at liberty to take him into the settlement Tye him & Keep him, and if at the expira[tion] of his Six days the fort was not attacked he would agree to have his throat Cut, the Indian as Capt. Cassity was Informed told in Easly's fort that as Soon as the Creeks came near they were to send a Runner to the little turkey town and that the Indians of that town were to Join them. Mr. Cassity Saw a Number of boats loaded with the Indians of that Town going up the River, and was Informed that the town was Totally Evacuated The Indian told also as Mr. Cassity was Informed that a Number of Pachachaha Indians would also Join the Creeks. Cassity also saw in Easlys Fort a Mr. John Walker who lives in the Chaktaw Nation who Came down as he was informed for the Express purpose of giving Information that the Fort would be destroyed and to advise his Brother who lives in the fort to remove from it.

I certify the above is correctly taken down as Related to me by Capt. Cassity

Jos. Carson Colo.
Volunteers Comdng. Fort

¹⁰ Fort Easley was west of the Tombigbee River, in present Choctaw County.

¹¹ Fort Madison was located in the fork between the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers, in present Clarke County.

¹² The Choctaw boundary line was just north of Fort Easley.

I certify that the above statement is in my opinion entitled to Credit. Capt. Cassity I believe to be a Man of Truth and the Indian I have known for a Number of years and believe him to be a Man as much entitled to Credit as any Other in the Chaktaw Nation

Wm McGrew Lt. Coln. 15th
Militia C. C. M T

The following letter from General Claiborne at St. Stephens is thought to have been addressed to Major J. P. Kennedy, who was in command at Mount Vernon.

St. Stephens 25th August 1813

Dear Sir/

It is said here that an attack on Easleys station is *Certain*, and about the same time an attack is contemplated in the Forks and on the Settlement of Tensaw. Mr. Gaines's letter to Judge Toulmin will enable you to judge of the correctness or incorrectness of the Report as well as myself.¹³ In fact I do not know what to think. The people here are very much alarmed, all are abandoning their homes. One hundred persons from Easley station reached this yesterday, and its with much mortification that I have to state that many of the men have abandoned the post—not more then six remain to guard the place & those only remain because it is expected my little force will rendezvous there tomorrow eveng. With a detachment of twenty mounted Dragoons, a detachment from Scotts Company of thirty and thirty from Dents I think *if the Indians* make the attack I will give a good account of them. Carson & Beasley will I am convinced—For the present Mount Vernon can be in no danger—but it is my wish that you secure yourselves as well as it is possible within the ground now enclosed by the pickets—for the particular defence of the magazine you will build a blockhouse.

The Citizens in the Vicinity as I was informed preposed to join & picket in the whole for the safety of all. If they are still disposed to do this under your immediate direction—You are at liberty to join them, & enclose the whole—and on our part give the use of *three teams* those must be hired in the neighborhood Having this day forwarded to the QrMaster money to enable him to discharge the two teams from the Mississippi—also put on fatigue as many men as possible. My orders of yesterday contemplated the Muster of Falkills & Morrison's Company's

¹³ George S. Gaines was the United States factor at St. Stephens, which lay between Fort Easley and Fort Stoddert.

at Mount Vernon. The situation of this place require that Captain Falkill & Capt. Morrison with all the men of their proper companies proceed to this place without loss of time. Let the well men of Dents accompany them—

Send the Sadler of Henrys troop to this place. There is a sadlers shop *here*, and I have several persons engaged in making holsters for the Dragoons—

Direct the Quarter Master to forward to this place a hundred & fifty dozen Cartredges half ball and other buckshot. He will deliver them to Capt. Falkill & take his receipt for them. Captain Falkill will receive his orders on his arrival at this place.

If the Citizens determine to assist in picketing the entire Cantonment be very particular in having it well constructed for defence. I rely on your judgment . . .¹⁴

Judge Harry Toulmin at Fort Stoddert, who was something of an official information center, wrote Governor David Holmes of the Mississippi Territory as follows:

Fort Stoddert 27th Aug. [18]13

Dear Sir.

The cloud blackens. I fear that the enemy will come too soon at last. I am seriously appre[hensive] that without farther aid a large part of our population will fall a sacrifice.

Whilst I was attending court on the Pascagola, an express came from Genl. Claiborne, then in the fork of Tombigby & Alabama, bringing letters from him & from Mr. Geo. Gaines. The general under date of Aug. 24th writes as follows.

"Easley's station is threatened.¹⁵ An attack is expected to be made by about 400 creeks, in 4 or 5 days. Having two companies and a detachment of dragoons" (in all about 80) "at my disposition, I march with them to Easleys to day by way of St. Stephens and Col. McGrew's station. Should the Indians carry into effect their threat, I will give a good account of them.

["]The Unfriendly Creeks sent a runner to the Choctaws at Turkey town, and required they should immediately remove, otherwise they should by them be considered as *whites* and *enemies*. The Choctaws have obeyed the summons and removed.

¹⁴ The remainder of this letter has been destroyed.

¹⁵ A footnote in the original letter adds, "It lies I believe near the Choctaw line, West of Tombigby."

[“]It is stated that the Creeks are encamped about 14 miles above Easleys. Immediately on my arrival I shall ascertain the fact, and put the place in the best possible situation to sustain the first attack, and if not greatly outnumbered will meet the enemy in the field. I believe Col. Carson with 150 men at this post.” (in the fork).

Mr Geo. Gaines writes as follows, on the 25th Augst. “Yesterday and the day before great alarm was felt here in consequence of a friendly Choctaw well known to many of our citizens, stating that about 400 Creeks were assembled at a small Choctaw town just above Patchelchooka on the Tombigby with an intention of attacking Easley’s fort at Attala bluff and after carrying it of dividing into two parties and sweeping both sides of the river down to this place [St. Stephens], when they would be met with other parties of Indians who would attack the forts on Bassett’s creek in the fork¹⁶ and in the settlements of Tensaw at the same time. The party on the river intended attacking Easley’s fort sufficiently strong and numerous to take the public store and destroy this place. This Indian states that the attack would be made in ten days (3 days are now past)

[“]I am not well acquainted with the Choctaw Indian who has so much alarmed us:—but Major M’Grew tells me he has known him for many years and that he is a remarkably honest, truthful fellow. He offers his head as a forfeit, if what he has stated does not take place. Several families from Easley’s fort have already arrived here, & all it is said have left it. Two or three other forts are also breaking up.”—So for Mr. Gaines.

Other evidences exist of the same general fact. A person comes from Tensaw to-day who states that it is there understood (but I do not learn in what way) that the Creeks have been assembling in the forks of Coosa & Tallapoosa, and that they have taken their women and children to the Black Warrior settlement,¹⁷ where they will be on the way from the nation to the western side of the Mississippi but if the Choctaws could be embodied in the mean time, their progress might be arrested.

The mail rider also from the Chickasaw agency was informed by the Choctaw chief Pooshamattahaw that the Creeks had been or were assembled on the Black Warrior, dancing the war dance, and would certainly break in upon us in about eight days. It must have been 3 days ago that he saw the Chief.

¹⁶ The place is in present Clarke County.

¹⁷ The place is present Tuscaloosa.

You will not wonder that we are much agitated by these accounts. Some families are going to Mobile. Some are coming down to the Cantonment at Mount Vernon, which is however in a verry bad state of defence:—but we are trying what we can do to strengthen it. I propose moving into it in a few days. The 7th regt. is at Mobile but cannot move till Genl. Flournoy comes, who is at the bay of St. Louis. I have just written to him. I have supposed the present aspect of affairs sufficiently impressive to render it expedient to send an express to you:—and Capn. Kennedy has been so good as to exert himself to accomplish this object. I know your anxiety for our protection:—and I am sure that your knowledge of the above facts will convince our fellow citizens in the west that every exertion ought to be made to afford speedy succour to this part of the territory. We have been deeply disgusted at the proceedings of those who have remonstrated against your offering aid for our protection. Has the New England spirit diffused itself over any part of the Mississi. Territory:—and are the militia not only to be confined to their own state, but to a particular section of their state or territory? If this settlement be exterminated, what barrier will be left to the people of the Mississi.? Considerations of this kind surely ought to have weight with our fellow citizens of the west.—if their patriotism has none. Does such a restlessness of spirit exist among us, such a capitious disposition to view every thing thro' a false medium, that public officers of high standing can never be admitted to do any thing right?

Must every act be censured and every measure of public policy be held up to public execration? I trust this is not the case. I trust that there is more justice, more liberality, more generosity amongst our fellow citisens on the Mississipp. I hope that the insinuations thrown out in the papers are not well founded,—that you have not been thwarted in your endeavors, to afford us aid, and to prevent our destruction.

The Tennessee papers state that the 3d Regt is actually destined for the Creek country. I hope that ere now they are in motion towards it. Delay will only defeat the object. They may come indeed to punish, but they will come too late to save. I fear, however, as no orders have come for the Tennessee volunteers to march, that none may have come to settle the destination of the 3d. Regt. I am dear sir very sincerely your faithful servt.

Harry Toulmin

P. S. Genl. Flournoy has scruples about delivering to the citizens any public arms.

If there be any arms and ammunition at the disposal of the Executive of the Territory, some supply in this quarter would be highly useful & acceptable.¹⁸

A particularly interesting letter is the following, written by Major Beasley to General Claiborne on the morning of the massacre. As we read, we almost open our mouths to try to tell Beasley, comfortable in his false sense of security, of what fate has in store, as if by some kind of telepathy we could save him.

Mims's Block House 30th Augt. 1813

Sir

I Send You inclosed the morning report of yesterday of my command; from which you will perceive from having ordered from this place a good many of those who came up with me; and also in having Scattered my command in so many places that you render me unable; if the Indians should appear in any force; to do anything more than to defend the several forts; that I should be utterly unable to leave the fort, and meet any number of the enemy, more especially when you know that but a few of the volunteer militia can be relied on. I Have improved the fort at this place and have it much Stronger than when you were here. Messrs. Pierces' Stockade is not very Strong, but he has erected three Strong Block Houses & I received from Ensign Davis who commands at Major Hanson's Mills, a letter of the 27th Inst. in which he States "We shall be by to morrow in so great a State of defence that I should not be afraid any number of Indians that would come against us" I went down at the time to see the men from this place, and concerted with Mr. Kennedy, (Maj. Hanson being absent) the plan of defence. I received of Mr. Kennedy the plank the QrMaster gave an order for but the boat could carry only a part of it, and I directed Mr. Davis to Send the balance when he should send over for provisions, which will be in a few days as the men who went over from the Cantonment took with them only twenty days' Provisions which will now be soon out. I wrote to you Yesterday requesting that Messrs. Pierce's might be furnished with Some of the Muskets in the hands of the QrMaster unfit for use; they will have them repaired at their own expense having a Smith at their Service and a Shop of their own; also for 15 or 20 good Muskets if you have them and can possibly Spare them.

¹⁸ MS in Mississippi Territorial Archives (Mississippi State Department of Archives and History, Jackson), Series A, XIII (hereinafter M.T. Archives, A, XIII).

There was a false alarm here yesterday; two negro boys belonging to Mr. Randon were out some distance from the Fort minding some beef cattle and told that they saw a great number of Indians painted, running and hallooing, on towards Messrs. Pierces' Mill. The Conclusion was that they knew the Mill Fort to be more vulnerable than this and that they had determined to make their attack there first. I dispatched Capt. Middleton with 8 or 10 men all mounted to reconnoitre & ascertain the strength of the enemy, that if they were not too powerful we would turn out the most of the men here and pursue on to Pierces Mill; but the alarm has proved to be a false one. What gave some plausibility to the report of the negro boys at first was some of Mr. Randon's negroes who had been sent up to his plantation for corn and reported his plantation to be full of Indians committing every kind of Havoc; but I now doubt the truth of that report; I was much pleased at the appearance of the Soldiers here at the time of the Alarm yesterday when it was expected every moment that the Indians would appear in sight, the Soldiers very generally appeared anxious to see them.

I expect the Liberty detachment of Volunteers must have arrived at the Cantonment by this time,¹⁹ if so I hope you will let me have the remainder of Jack's and Middleton's men; and any others that the more exposed situation of other posts taken into view you may think it convenient to spare.

Among our Sick there is but one man in any way dangerous, and he suffers for such nourishment as suits his case; particularly wine, and I have directed Doctor Osborne to avail himself of the opportunity that now offers, to send to Dr. Kerr for some of that article. It is probable that a few bottles of it would save his life.

The Command which now go down to Mount Vernon, are sent for Provisions; I have wrote Mr. Henry particularly on that subject.

I am with the highest esteem

Your ObtSrvt.

Daniel Beasley Majr.

Commg. Station

Suddenly, in broad daylight, at mid-day of August 30, a large body of hostile Creek Indians charged upon the fort, undetected until within thirty yards of the gate. Major Beasley,

¹⁹ Liberty was in the southern part of the Natchez district.

desperately trying to close the gate, was the first to fall. A bloody massacre of the inhabitants of the fort followed.²⁰

Judge Toulmin, who, like the others, had expected the Creek attack to fall first on Fort Easley and the settlements in the fork, wrote the following remarkable communication to General Flournoy while the massacre was taking place at Fort Mims.

Mount Vernon August 30, 1813

Extract of a letter from Judge Toulman to Gen. Flournoy

I have this day heard again from Mr. Gaines, who informs me that no Indians had appeared, & that the alarm had in great measure subsided. Such is unhappily the fluctuating temper of the public mind, that premature fears are perpetually indulged in, which are immediately followed by a security equally premature but infinitely more dangerous. It was but this morning that Major Beasley wrote down that he believed that the indications of the approach of Indians, of which he had recvd. an account, was unfounded and at noon he was vigorously assailed at Fort Mims on Tensaw by a considerable body of them. What the result is we do not know, but the smokes of burning houses in that quarter are now seen on the river bank at Ft Stoddart. What the number of assailants is we do not know. Several persons who happened to be on the outside of the fort have come down, they escaped at the commencement of the battle. One person thinks he saw 200 Indians, but he saw only one line of them, and it seems there were two lines, and another person, a half breed, and probably a more accurate observer, thinks they amounted to between 4 & 500. A negro also, who had been a prisoner among them & had escaped, states that one body of 400 came to Mims' and another body of the same size went to the Settlement in the forks. I have not however seen this man. His account however agrees with one given by a Chactaw Indian to Mr. Gaines. We are in a situation truly distressing, all the people have abandoned their houses and this unfortunate stoccade is crowded with women and Children. I am here with my family but I feel no confidence in my situation. For my own part I can anticipate nothing but a dreadful

²⁰ Accounts of the massacre at Fort Mims are found in Albert J. Pickett, *History of Alabama, and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi, from the Earliest Period* (Charleston, 1851), II, 264-284, and H. S. Halbert and T. H. Ball, *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814* (Chicago, 1895), 143-176.

blow upon our Settlements, and a melancholy destruction of our population . . . [two lines illegible]

A population so scattered as ours, and so little accustomed to indian warfare, can oppose but a feeble resistance.

I have the Honor &c
Signed Harry Toulmin

A true Coppy from the original

Wm. R. Cox.²¹

The following newspaper clipping, of unknown origin, gives a picture of the massacre at Fort Mims as it appeared from Fort Pierce, three miles away, and also of the safe retreat of the inmates of the latter stockade to Mobile.²²

Extract of a letter from Lieut. Montgomery, of the Mississippi Volunteer Regiment to his father, Samuel Montgomery, Esq. of this county, dated Mobile, Sept. 4, 1813.

I arrived at this place early this morning, after a most fatiguing march of three days and one night. I had been for some time past in command with a detachment of 40 men, in a stockade, at Pierce's Mills, within one mile [a country mile!] of Mimm's station, where major Beasley commanded; he had with him about 120 volunteers. He was attacked on Monday last, about eleven o'clock by a large body of Indians.—The firing and yells of the Indians were distinctly heard at this post, until after four o'clock in the afternoon, when the firing ceased. It was impossible to render them any assistance from my small force. I ordered every man under arms, at their posts, during the night, expecting an attack. Indians were continually seen, passing the fort, at a distance. At noon the next day, I sent out an officer and 3 men, on horseback, to reconnoitre.—On their return they reported that fort Mimms was in possession of the Indians. I immediately sent down to the river, to endeavor to secure a boat, to assist us to escape; the spies I sent out informed me that the swamp was full of Indians. Thus circumstanced, I determined on a retreat by land to this place, as it was impossible for me to defend the fort against such a large body of savages as I had ascertained to be in the neighbourhood. We commenced our retreat at dark, and did not halt during the night, nor all the next day. Our party

²¹ MS in M.T. Archives, A, XIII.

²² Fort Pierce was only temporarily deserted. Some months later it became, for a short time, the headquarters of General Andrew Jackson.

consisted of 200 souls, who have all arrived safe at this place. Within three hours after our departure, we have reason to believe our fort was in flames.²³

The widespread panic resulting from the massacre at Fort Mims was so great that General Claiborne, returning from Fort Easley to Fort Stoddert, waited over three weeks before daring to send a detachment to bury the dead at Fort Mims. Returning from that disagreeable task, the commander of the detachment wrote Claiborne:

Mount Vernon 26 Septem 1813

Sir,

Agreeable to your order of the 21st Inst. we proceeded to Mim's Fort to collect the Bones of our countrymen that fell in the late attack on that place and to bury their remains—the last human office that we could perform to the obsequies of our Fellow Citizens, and brother Soldiers.

We collected and consigned to the earth, Two hundred and forty seven, including men, women, and children.—The adjacent woods were strictly searched for our countrymen, and in that pursuit, we discovered at least one hundred slaughtered Indians.—They were covered with rails, brush &c.,—we could not be mistaken as to their being Indians, as they were inter'd with their war dress and implements,—and although they have massacred a number of our helpless women and children, it is beyond doubt to them, a dear bought victory. The adjacent country, we have strictly examined, and no sign of Indians could be discovered.

The object of our command being Completed, we have returned to this post, *without any opportunity of losing our scalps or getting those of the enemy.*

We have the honor to be
Your obt Servt
J. P. Kennedy
Brigade Major
Dommanding the detachment.²⁴

May they rest in peace!

²³ Quoted from an unidentified newspaper clipping in the J. F. H. Claiborne Collection.

²⁴ MS in M.T. Archives, A, XIII. The words italicized are marked through in the original.

Book Reviews

Banking in Alabama, 1816-1860. Volume I, 1816-1837. By William H. Brantley. Birmingham, Alabama: Privately printed, 1961. xxiv, 500 pp. \$10.00. (Copies may be obtained from the University of Alabama Supply Store, University, Alabama.)

The first volume of William H. Brantley's exhaustive history of banking in Alabama prior to the Civil War has just come from the press. It is a major contribution to the history of the State of Alabama in that it covers the obscure and confusing period in which the controversial struggles between private banks and the state banks dominated the politics of the state.

Mr. Brantley has wisely chosen to tell the facts and not to engage in too much interpretation. He has gathered a vast amount of information and presented it in such fashion as to hold the interest of the reader, and to win the admiration of those who have had a special interest in the financial history of Alabama. This book is of major importance to students of Alabama history and will certainly provide the "launching pad" for other important researches.

Banking in Alabama, 1816-1860, represents years of intensive and dedicated research. It is privately printed by the author and donated to the University of Alabama with the understanding that all proceeds accruing from sales will be used for the purchase of books for the Library. This is a notable and generous gift.

Volume One begins in the territorial period with the establishment of the Planters and Mechanics Bank of Huntsville and ends in 1837 in the second year of the administration of Governor Clement C. Clay. These were the formative years of the State of Alabama. They were the years of the pioneers of business in the state and years in which the people had a great need of sound financial systems and reliable sources of credit to finance their enterprises. These were the days of the burgeoning Cotton Kingdom in which the planters had incredible difficulties in marketing their crops and receiving pay for their labors in sound money. Mr. Brantley has presented the conditions of the time with remarkable clarity and understanding.

Here in Alabama an empire was in the making. Settlers were coming

to the land in great numbers and the Land Office was doing a booming business. There was a vital need for money to provide for capitalization of business. Means had to be found to move and market produce. Specie was at a premium and depreciated notes of the banks was the principal medium of exchange.

The story of the creation of a state banking system into which went much of the resources of the young state; the issuance of bonds to finance the system; the political controls which were placed in the hands of the legislature, and the inevitable political struggles which followed—all make a fascinating story. The consequent financial disaster and the resulting efforts to correct the situation did much to shape the economic and political history of the state for many years.

The necessity of meeting an early deadline does not allow for a critical analysis of this volume. The writer can find nothing but praise for the author for his excellent presentation of what has hitherto been the most tangled and confusing period in Alabama history.

Mr. Brantley has dedicated his book to the amateur historians of Alabama, but this is no amateurish history. It is well organized and copiously annotated, and will provide much delight to students of Alabama history.

William H. Brantley is an "Old Pro."

RALPH B. DRAUGHON
Auburn University

The River Plantation of Thomas and Marianne Gaillard: 1832-1850.
By Caroline Gaillard Hurtell. Mobile: The Rankin Press, 1959. 156 pp.
\$5.00.

Thomas Gaillard and Marianne Gendron Palmer were both members of wealthy, cultured Huguenot families of South Carolina. They were married on May 12, 1812. For the first twenty years of their married life they lived in their native state where Thomas was a prosperous planter and a member of the state legislature.

In 1831, apparently because he was embittered over a political defeat, Thomas Gaillard came to Claiborne, Alabama, where he purchased a large tract of land on the east bank of the river just south of the town and built a home. In 1832 he brought his wife and seven children (two more were born in Alabama) to their new home. The River Plantation contained eight or ten thousand acres, and the Gaillards were said to have owned as many as three hundred slaves. Here for eighteen years

the family, in spite of some financial reverses, lived the good life of a cotton planter family.

But after 1850 the happy family became "scattered." Thomas and Marianne moved to Mobile; the children married and some of them left the community; four of Thomas' sons and four of his grandsons served in the Confederate Army, a son and a grandson were killed; and John, the eldest son, and Marianne died in 1860 and Thomas in 1864. As for the plantation, it passed from the possession of the Gaillard family in 1858; the home was destroyed by fire in 1875 or 1876; and today, to quote the author, "Time . . . has left hardly a trace of the River Plantation."

The River Plantation is a collection of "stories" about the members of the Gaillard family which the author, the great-granddaughter of Thomas and Marianne, has woven into "a pattern." She gathered the materials from family letters, family papers, and from "things told" her by two aunts and a cousin. The work contains neither footnotes nor bibliography. It does, however, contain some interesting illustrations, maps, and supplementary material.

Although the little volume has in it some awkward paragraphs and cases of undocumented praise of family virtues, it also has in it many forthright statements, lively anecdotes, and a few passages of haunting beauty. The value of the book lies in the fact that it is—as the author intended it to be—"a lovely picture of a time that is forever past."

ROBERT PARTIN

Auburn University

History of Henry County, Alabama. By Mrs. Marvin Scott. Pensacola, Florida: Frank R. Parkhurst & Son, 1961. 506 pp. \$12.50.

For many years Mrs. Marvin Scott, of Headland, collected and assembled historical data concerning Henry County, Alabama, but not until the Abbeville Kiwanis Club came to her aid was she able to see the results of her labors printed. Nor were the Kiwanians alone Mrs. Scott's benefactors—they solicited and received the help of the Lions Club, the Home Demonstration Club, the Matrons Club and other local civic and social groups, all of which joined hands to make this *History of Henry County, Alabama* truly a community project.

Mrs. Scott's narrative begins with the arrival of "squatters" in Southeast Alabama in 1814, shortly after the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. In

1819 Henry County was created—just one day before Alabama became a state—and named in honor of Patrick Henry, the “Fireball of the Revolution.” By 1821 settlers had begun to come in from states along the eastern seaboard, mostly from South Carolina and Virginia.

The author presents a brief chronology of each community within the county, among them Franklin and Otho (both “dead towns” now), Richmond, Columbia, Abbeville, and Lawrenceville. She also locates and describes Indian villages, newspapers, churches, schools, court-houses, and early homes. However, the majority of the book (pages 339-506) is an account of Henry County’s families, scores of them, arranged alphabetically. Altogether, this important genealogical record brings together data unavailable elsewhere.

William W. Nordan, chairman of the Historical Committee of the Abbeville Kiwanis Club, states in the preface that “The writing of this historical document is an effort to place in print for posterity the early recordings of people, places and happenings within one of the oldest counties in the state.” He should have added, as he did in a private letter to this writer, that it was entirely a labor of love and that Mrs. Scott is the “only person in the county that could possibly produce such information.”

History of Henry County was printed in a limited edition of only 100 copies, nearly all of which were subscribed for before publication. In the years to come this book will be referred to time and time again as a primary source of early historical data for all of Southeast Alabama from the Conecuh to the Chattahoochee. It is indeed a task happily conceived and well executed.

WM. STANLEY HOOLE
University of Alabama

Most Lovely Lizzie: Love Letters of a Young Confederate Soldier. Edited by William Young Elliott. Birmingham, Alabama: privately mimeographed, 1958. 72pp. \$1.00.

These letters, written by Samuel King Vann, an 18-year-old Confederate private in the Nineteenth Alabama Infantry, to Nancy Elizabeth Neel, four years younger, begin in late 1863 at Tyner Station, Tennessee and end in February, 1865 near Green Cut, Georgia. In each his love for his “dear lady” rings out loud and clear, distinctly heard above the tumult and the fighting. But withal his affection he never

fails to keep his fiancé informed of the starkness of war: "We have only 24 men [where] over one hundred stood when the Co. first left, and only 9 of the first that went out," he wrote October 3, 1864. After his brigade had repelled an attack at Franklin, Tennessee on December 5, 1864, he wrote: "Oh! . . . such a slaughter of men never was seen before. . . . I counted 30 dead Yanks in a space of ground not larger than a common dwelling house."

After the war Samuel married his "Lovely Lizzie," who bore him two daughters, one of whom became the mother of Editor William Young Elliott. Kicked by a mule, Samuel died suddenly in 1870, aged 25; Lizzie died in 1884 at 34. They are buried side by side at Taylor's Chapel Cemetery, a few miles northeast of Birmingham.

This booklet of letters, attractively bound, should be in the library of every collector of Confederate Alabamiana.

WM. STANLEY HOOLE
University of Alabama

Julia S. Tutwiler and Social Progress in Alabama. By Anne Gary Pannell and Dorothea Wyatt. University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1961, x, 158 pp. \$3.50.

In her youth Julia Tutwiler expressed intense admiration for Joan of Arc. This admiration was particularly appropriate, for in spite of many differences the modern woman and the medieval Saint were selfless and dedicated feminine crusaders. The Alabamian's traits were perhaps more like those of Bernard Shaw's Saint Joan than of the original Saint. In the Epilogue to *Saint Joan*, Shaw displays the discomfort of most mortals in the presence of a saint, and their willingness, even eagerness, to avoid one.

As the title *Julia Tutwiler and Social Progress in Alabama* indicates, the co-authors of this book have chosen to concentrate on Miss Tutwiler's efforts and accomplishments in the fields of prison reform and education, particularly higher education for women, rather than to produce a conventional biography. The book is divided into five sections: the first deals with Julia Tutwiler's childhood and young womanhood to the end of the Civil War; the second, with her education in this country and abroad, with especial emphasis on her study at the Institute of Deaconesses in Kaiserswerth, Germany, which profoundly influenced her subsequent career; the third, with her professional

life as teacher and administrator; the fourth, with her work as humanitarian and reformer, particularly in relation to prisoners; and fifth, with her twilight days—disappointments and controversies—and her death. Other characters in the book are stringently subordinated to the main character, and personal relationships not directly related to the shaping of her career are disregarded.

The book is straightforward and unpretentious. The subject is not unduly idealized, nor are her adversaries denigrated. All is reasonable and unimpassioned. Nevertheless, a portrait emerges of a woman endowed with stubborn determination, persistent devotion to improvement of the lot of her fellow creatures, and an armor-like imperviousness to discouragement or ridicule. Although imbued with the terrible strength of the meek, Julia Tutwiler had an impractical side which led to difficulties with state officials and to enforced retirement from the presidency of Livingston Normal College. However, the authors have pointed out unobtrusively that the impractical woman brought about enormously practical results.

A number of Julia Tutwiler's poems, including the state song "Alabama," are quoted. Illustrations depict some of the material monuments to her work: the Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women, at Wetumpka; dormitories for women, at the University of Alabama, at Montevallo, and at Livingston; and the Julia Tutwiler Bridge, at Gainesville.

GEORGE BURKE JOHNSTON
Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Rebellion in Missouri: 1861. By Hans C. Adamson. Philadelphia: The Chilton Co., 1961. 305 pp. \$5.00.

Rebellion in Missouri: 1861, by Colonel Hans C. Adamson (USAF, Ret.) is an account of General Nathaniel Lyons' 90-day campaign that secured the state for the Union. Lyons' spectacular exploits began with his capture of Camp Jackson in St. Louis on May 10 and ended when he died in the Battle of Wilson's Creek on August 10.

The book is copiously illustrated and well-indexed. John K. Hulston, an authority on Lyons, contributed the Foreword.

WM. STANLEY HOOLE
University of Alabama

News and Notices

Edward A. Mueller, 1615 Hasosaw Nene, Tallahassee, Florida, is the author of a handsomely drawn print of the C. S. S. *Alabama*, showing a map of her voyages, a list of ships she destroyed, and other pertinent data. The composition is 20" x 25", overall, lithographed on ivory cover stock, and ideal for framing. The sail plan of the *Alabama* is based on prints in the Smithsonian Institution (which, incidentally, is now having an authentic model of the vessel constructed for display purposes). Copies of the print are available from Mr. Mueller for \$3.00 each.

* * *

The 1961 *Directory of Historical Societies and Agencies in the United States and Canada*, issued recently by the American Association for State and Local History (816 State St., Madison, Wis.), lists the following seventeen organizations in Alabama: Alabama Baptist Historical Society, Alabama Historical Association, Alabama Society of Medical History, Birmingham Historical Society, Blount County Historical Society, Dale County Historical Society, Department of Archives and History, Etowah Historical Society, Hale County Historical Society, Historic Mobile Preservation Society, Huntsville Historical Society, John H. Forney Historical Society, North Alabama Historical Association, Old South Historical Society, Pike County Historical Society, Society of Pioneers of Montgomery, and Tennessee Valley Historical Society. The Tuscaloosa County Historical Society was not included.

* * *

Bert Neville of Selma, Alabama has rendered his state a service in editing, annotating, and reprinting a series of valuable articles on steamboating, written by Judge James F. Foster, which originally appeared in the *Wilcox Banner* (Camden), in 1904. Entitled *Ante-Bellum Floating Palaces of the Alabama River and the "Good Old Times in Dixie,"* the 66-page booklet is attractively designed and illustrated. Copies may be had from the author.

* * *

Dr. Clifton L. Ganus, vice president of Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas, addressed the General John H. Forney Historical Society at

its seventh annual meeting in Gadsden, May 18. Lt. Gen. Edward M. Almond, (Ret.) of Anniston is president and Mrs. John B. Privett, Birmingham, vice president of the society.

* * *

Mrs. Virginia Bullock-Willis of Fair Hill, Greene County, is the author of *Pawns of Fate*, a novel "of adventure, romance, and escape from the Nazis in World War II France, a tale in which France-loving Americans, Britons and White Russian exiles find themselves in as much danger of bombings by Hitler's *Luftwaffe* as were the French themselves." Mrs. Bullock-Willis, well known as a world traveler, has written many articles and verses for publication. *Pawns of Fate* is available from Vantage Press, 120 West 31st St., New York City (\$3.95).

* * *

A Civil War Cook Book, containing more than one thousand "tested and tasty recipes which were popular during the period of the Civil War," has been issued by Lincoln Memorial University Press, Harrogate, Tennessee. Edited by Myrtle E. Smith, the volume sells for \$4.95 per copy.

* * *

Several hundred persons attended the Alabama Historical Association's Fourth Annual Pilgrimage in Greensboro on September 30. Six beautiful old homes, the old Southern University building, and a half-dozen churches were opened to the pilgrims. A picnic lunch was enjoyed on the Greensboro High School grounds.

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